WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A surgical gown comprising:

a main gown configured to cover a predetermined area of a wearer's body, said main gown having a back portion and an opposed front portion, said front portion having respective left and right flaps;

left and right sleeves attached to said main gown to extend from respective lateral sides thereof;

said surgical gown being folded in a manner including:

(a) each of said left and right flaps being turned at least partially back upon itself to expose an interior surface of said main gown;

(b) said left and right sleeves each being folded behind said back portion of said main gown;

(c) said main gown being back folded along first and second longitudinal fold lines extending substantially parallel to said lateral sides thereof;

(d) said main gown being further back folded after folding along said longitudinal fold lines along at least one transverse fold line substantially transverse to said lateral sides of said main gown to define left and right hand pockets; and

(d) said main gown being folded along a third longitudinal fold line to form a folded surgical gown such that said left and right hand pockets are located on opposite sides thereof.

2. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 1, wherein said main gown is back folded along first and second transverse fold lines after being back folded along said first and second longitudinal fold lines.

3. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 2, wherein said main gown is further back folded along an initial transverse fold line before being back folded along said first and second longitudinal fold lines.

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4. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 3, wherein said main gown is folded along said initial transverse fold line and first and second transverse fold lines to have a final longitudinal length less than approximately one-fourth an initial longitudinal length of said main gown.

5. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 3, wherein said sleeves are folded behind said back portion of said main gown before said main gown is folded along said initial transverse fold line.

6. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 5, wherein said sleeves are folded behind said back portion of said main gown at an acute angle from a transverse dimension of said main gown.

7. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 6, wherein said sleeves are each folded in at said lateral sides of said main gown to completely cross one another behind said back portion of said main gown.

8. A surgical gown as set forth in claim 6, wherein said sleeves are each folded in at said lateral sides of said main gown and out at an intermediate location thereof back toward said lateral sides.

9. An apparatus for folding a garment having a main gown to which left and right sleeves are attached, said apparatus comprising a plurality of operative sections arranged in series including:

an infeed section having a platen surface adapted to horizontally support said main gown of said garment such that said sleeves hang vertically therefrom;

a sleeve-tucking section operative to fold said sleeves behind a back portion of said main gown;

a longitudinal folding section operative to fold said main gown along first and second longitudinal

fold lines to thereby decrease a transverse width of said garment; and

a transverse folding section operative to fold said main gown along at least one transverse fold line to form a folded garment.

10. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein said transverse folding section operatively succeeds said longitudinal folding section.

11. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, further comprising a support element at an output of said transverse folding section, to which said garment is delivered.

12. An apparatus as set forth in claim 11, wherein said support element includes a longitudinal folding bar about which a manual longitudinal fold may be made.

13. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein said transverse folding section is operative to fold said main gown along at least two transverse fold lines.

14. An apparatus as set forth in claim 13, wherein said infeed section delivers said garment to said sleeve-tucking section in a manner that forms an initial transverse fold in said garment.

15. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein:

said sleeve-tucking section includes a first dead plate of a width approximately equal to said garment, said sleeve-tucking section further having a first conveyor spaced slightly above and opposing said first dead plate to move said garment therealong; and

said longitudinal folding section includes a second dead plate of a width less than said garment, said longitudinal folding section further having a second conveyor spaced slightly above and opposing

said second dead plate to move said garment therealong.

16. An apparatus as set forth in claim 15, wherein said sleeve-tucking section comprises first and second movable sleeve tuckers located below opposite lateral sides of said first dead plate.

17. An apparatus as set forth in claim 15, wherein said longitudinal folding section includes first and second fixed folder plates located below said second dead plate.

18. An apparatus as set forth in claim 15, wherein said platen surface of said infeed section is reciprocatively movable to and from a location adjacent a nip defined between said first dead plate and said first conveyor to deliver said garment thereto.

19. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein said transverse folding section comprises:

first and second downslope conveyors;

first and second folding nips located opposite to respective of said first and second downslope conveyors; and

first and second reciprocative elements operative to engage said garment along a transverse fold line and move it into a respective of said first and second folding nips.

20. An apparatus for folding a garment, said apparatus comprising:

an infeed section having a horizontal platen surface reciprocatively movable between a recess position and a garment delivery position;

a longitudinal folding section including a lesser width dead plate having a width less than said garment and a conveyor opposing said lesser width dead plate to move said garment therealong, said longitudinal

folding section further including first and second folder plates located below said lesser width dead plate;

a transverse folding section having first and second folding nips located opposite respective first and second downslope conveyors, said transverse folding section further comprising first and second reciprocative elements operative to engage said garment along a transverse fold line and move it into a respective of said first and second folding nips; and

a support element at an output of said transverse folding section to which said garment is delivered.

13 ~~21~~. An apparatus for folding a garment as set forth in claim ~~20~~ 12, further including a sleeve-tucking section operatively preceding said longitudinal folding section, said sleeve-tucking section functional to fold sleeves of said garment behind a back portion thereof.

14 ~~22~~. An apparatus for folding a garment as set forth in claim ~~21~~ 13, wherein said sleeve-tucking section includes a greater width dead plate of a width approximately equal to said garment, said sleeve tucking section having a further conveyor opposing said greater width dead plate to move said garment therealong.

15 ~~23~~. An apparatus for folding a garment as set forth in claim ~~22~~ 14, wherein said infeed section delivers said garment to said sleeve-tucking section in a manner that forms a transverse fold in said garment.

16 ~~24~~. An apparatus for folding a garment as set forth in claim ~~22~~ 14, wherein said sleeve tucking section comprises first and second movable sleeve tuckers located below opposite lateral sides of said greater

width dead plate.

25. An apparatus for folding a garment as set forth in claim 20, wherein said support element includes a longitudinal folding bar about which a manual longitudinal fold may be made.

26. A method of folding a surgical gown having a main gown to which respective left and right sleeves are attached, said method comprising steps of:

(a) folding left and right flaps of said main gown at least partially back upon themselves to expose an interior surface of said main gown;

(b) folding said left and right sleeves behind a back portion of said main gown;

(c) folding said main gown back along first and second longitudinal fold lines extending substantially parallel to respective lateral sides thereof;

(d) folding said main gown back along at least one transverse fold line extending substantially transverse to said lateral sides of said main gown to define left and right hand pockets after folding along said first and second longitudinal fold lines; and

(e) folding said main gown along a third longitudinal fold line to form a folded surgical gown such that said left and right hand pockets are located on opposite sides thereof.

27. A method of folding a surgical gown as set forth in claim 26, wherein said main gown is folded in step (d) back along first and second transverse fold lines.

28. A method of folding a surgical gown as set forth in claim 27, wherein said main gown is further folded back along an initial transverse fold line before being folded along said first and second longitudinal fold lines.

29. A method of folding a surgical gown as set

forth in claim 28, wherein said main gown is folded along said initial transverse fold line and first and second transverse fold lines to have a final longitudinal length less than approximately one-fourth an original longitudinal length of said main gown.

30. A method of folding a surgical gown as set forth in claim 28, wherein said sleeves are folded behind said back portion of said main gown before said main gown is folded along said initial transverse fold line.

31. A method of folding a surgical gown as set forth in claim 30, wherein said sleeves are folded behind said back portion of said main gown at an acute angle from a transverse dimension of said main gown.

32. A method of folding a surgical gown as set forth in claim 31, wherein said sleeves are each folded in at said lateral sides of said main gown to completely cross one another behind said back portion of said main gown.

33. A method of folding a surgical gown as set forth in claim 31, wherein said sleeves are each folded in at said lateral sides of said main gown and out at an intermediate location thereof back toward said lateral sides.

34. A method of folding a long-sleeved garment having a back portion and an opposed front portion defining left and right flaps, said method comprising steps of:

(a) folding said left and right flaps at least partially back upon themselves to expose an interior surface of said garment;

(b) folding left and right sleeves of said garment behind said back portion at an acute angle to a transverse dimension thereof;

(c) folding a selected length of said garment

back along an initial transverse fold;

(d) folding said garment back along first and second longitudinal fold lines extending substantially parallel to respective lateral sides thereof; and

(e) folding said garment back along two subsequent transverse fold lines extending substantially transverse to said lateral sides such that said garment has a longitudinal length less than approximately one-fourth an original longitudinal length thereof.

35. A method of folding a long-sleeved garment as set forth in claim 34, further comprising the step of folding said garment along a central longitudinal fold line to form a folded garment wherein left and right hand pockets are located on opposite sides thereof to facilitate donning of said garment by a wearer without touching an outer surface of said garment.

36. A folded garment produced by the method of claim 35.